

LIFE'S LIKE THAT By FRED NEHER



"You're always after me to make my own hats... how do you like yours?"

Hearings on Gas Price Wars Leave Issue in Doubt

By VINCENT THOMAS
 Assemblyman, 46th District
 Mr. and Mrs. Average Consumer have an understandable interest in the prices of their every-day necessities. Most such prices change slowly, though there has been a gradual upward trend in recent years. Gasoline, that vital motor fuel, seems to have been a major exception of the general price situation. Sporadic gas price wars have popped up here and there over the state during the past several years, and consumers have benefited for short periods.

Independent gasoline retailers grew increasingly bitter about the effect of these wars on their operations. Their associations have insistently demanded some kind of legislative enactment to control or prevent such wars. As a result, the Assembly Interim Committee on Manufacturing, Oil, and Mining Industry made an 18-month study of the problem. Its report and recommendations have just been released.

DURING ITS many hearings around the state, the committee heard at length from individual station owners, association spokesmen, and representatives of both large and small petroleum companies doing business in many ways. In its report the committee states that much of the testimony was inconclusive, and even contradictory.

At these hearings, major oil companies were accused of controlling retail gas prices. It was alleged that prices are fixed to keep competition by independent oil companies to a minimum. It was argued that a dealer in a major brand has a very short business life if he does not follow company prices.

Dealers complained that major companies act together in price fixing, and should be subject to anti-trust prosecution, but no actions have been started. The unfair practices law forbids selling below cost in order to injure competition, but nothing has been done under that law, either, it was claimed.

COMPANY spokesmen controverted all these accusations, and offered much evidence to prove that they have no foundation in fact.

As a result of its study, the Committee concluded that no legislation providing for state supervision of gasoline marketing to stop price wars should be enacted in our 1963 session. "In the absence of an adverse effect on the general public welfare, and in the absence of a conclusive demonstration that illegal practices are currently being followed, new legislation respecting marketing practices in the gasoline industry is not warranted at this time," the report said.

The Committee said that obviously gas price wars have a bad effect on the many people in the business of selling gas at retail. Despite this, it could pin-point no principal cause or persistent group of causes for the wave of gas price wars which has crossed the state. Each such war seemed to be triggered by a different set of factors.

MAJOR GAS producers probably exercise substantial power over the price of gasoline sold by their own retailers, the Committee concluded, but no conclusive evidence was discovered as to whether or not such producers have conspired to fix uniform prices. It was also found that dealers could get freedom of control under present law to fix their own retail prices.

The Committee report gives us another example of how careful interim investigation can save us all some major controversial headaches at our 1963 session.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- Distant
- Coloring matter
- Church bench
- The self
- Chemical compound
- Before
- Imaginary belt in the heavens
- City in Russia
- Symbol for sulfur
- Peruse
- Federal agency (init.)
- Three-landed armadillo
- Possesses
- Persistence
- Indefinite article
- Exclamation
- Those holding office
- Preposition
- City in France
- Small rug
- Narrow, flat board
- Netherlands East Indies (abbr.)
- Ventilates
- Latin conjunction
- Walk
- Colorful bird
- Bureau
- Mountain in Crete
- Metal fastener
- Affirmative note
- Explosive noise
- Plaque
- Soak

DOWN

- Perianth
- Time gone by
- Staff
- Fruit
- Get to know
- Pronoun
- Man's nickname
- Allowance for waste
- Edible seed
- File mistaken
- Damp
- Electrified particle
- Falls
- Meadow
- Pretense
- Waterway
- Conjunction
- Talent
- Greek letter
- Essence
- Hindu peasants
- Pronoun
- Suffix: like
- Showy flower
- Run god
- French plural
- Article
- Unit of scale
- Likely hearing
- Civil injury
- Heraldry?
- Place grafted
- A state (abbr.)
- Fuse
- Knock
- Cravat
- Organ of hearing
- Grain
- Place
- A state (abbr.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39
 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51
 52 53 54 55 56
 57 58 59 60 61

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Liquid
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ALBER'S FLAPJACK MIX
 2 lb. pkg. **39c**

IMITATION
TROPICAL MAPLE SYRUP
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FROZEN
PICTSWEET
 PEAS, CUT CORN, MIXED VEGETABLES, CUT BROCCOLI SPEARS
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Elder Brau Beer
 6 1/2-qt. cans **99c**

ORIGINAL FORMULA—LONDON DRY
FINLEY'S GIN **\$2.98** full fifth

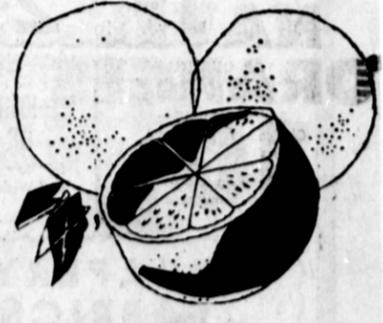
CINNAMON BAKERY
 CASHEW DATE COFFEE CAKE **59c**
 TOPPED WITH WHIPPED CREAM
 CHERRY TARTS 2 for **31c**
 REGULAR 35c LOAF BREAD
 DUTCH CRUNCH **29c**

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CRISP CARROTS

